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# Insights into job attachment during the pandemic, March 2022

Released 14/04/2022

**i** Source: [Labour Force, Australia, March 2022](#)

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## What is 'Job attachment'?

'Job attachment' refers to whether someone has a job that they are connected to.

With many series in this article not showing further COVID-19 disruptions in March 2022, the ABS is planning to cease publishing this article after the March 2022 issue (on 14 April 2022). The ABS will continue to monitor changes in job attachment and provide additional analysis when relevant.

## Are all people with job attachment employed?

Whether someone has a job is one of a number of elements used by the ABS to determine whether someone is employed or not, together with whether they have worked an hour or more (or whether they were temporarily absent from work) and whether they have been paid. For more on how the ABS defines someone as employed, refer to the [Glossary \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2022#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2022#glossary).

Given employment is determined using multiple criteria, it is possible for someone to have attachment to a job without necessarily being employed. Prior to the pandemic, there was a relatively small number of people each month who had attachment to a job but were not considered to be employed. These people are comprised of two groups:

1. People who have a job that they are away from without pay for more than a month (e.g. people on unpaid parental leave).
2. People who have a job but haven't started (or restarted) in it yet (who are categorised as either unemployed or not in the labour force according to their current availability to work and when the job could begin).

For more on how the ABS categorises people outside of employment, see the ABS release on '[Potential workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/latest-release\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/latest-release)'.

## Why is it useful to consider job attachment during the pandemic?

Unlike major economic shocks in the past, the current pandemic period has been characterised by a much greater number of people losing hours than people losing jobs. '[Insights into hours worked \(/articles/insights-hours-worked-march-2022\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/insights-hours-worked-march-2022)', which the ABS has published since March 2020, has highlighted the extent to which people have remained attached to a job but worked reduced or no hours around lockdowns and other restrictions.

Beyond more employed people working reduced hours, there have also been high numbers of recently employed people who have been without work and pay for extended periods of time. These people have dropped out of the employed population, but some have remained attached to a job.

Looking at people outside of employment who have job attachment is useful for a number of reasons, including:

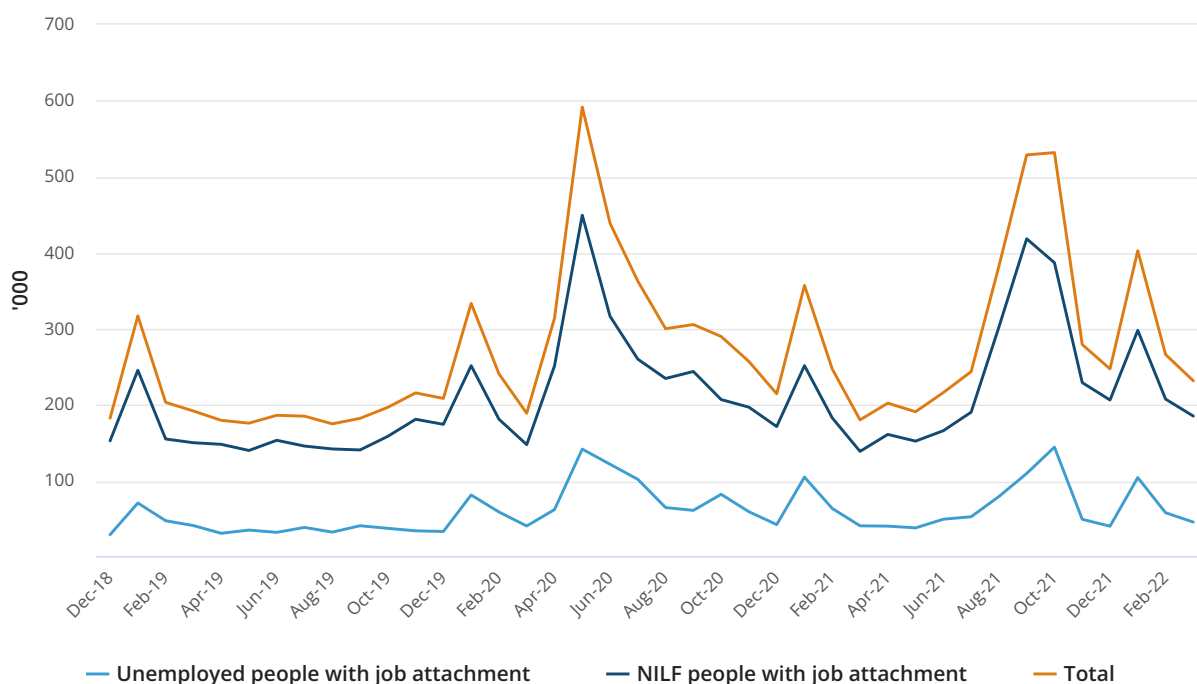
1. To understand some of the changes in labour force participation around lockdowns and other restrictions, given some people with an existing job may not actively look for

another job, unless required to (in addition to the limited ability for people to work or actively look for work).

2. To gauge the extent to which people who are not employed have a job and may be able to return to employment as restrictions ease and more usual economic activity resumes.
3. To understand the nature of impacts on people, according to whether they have lost their connection to their employer or business.

## People who were not employed and had job attachment

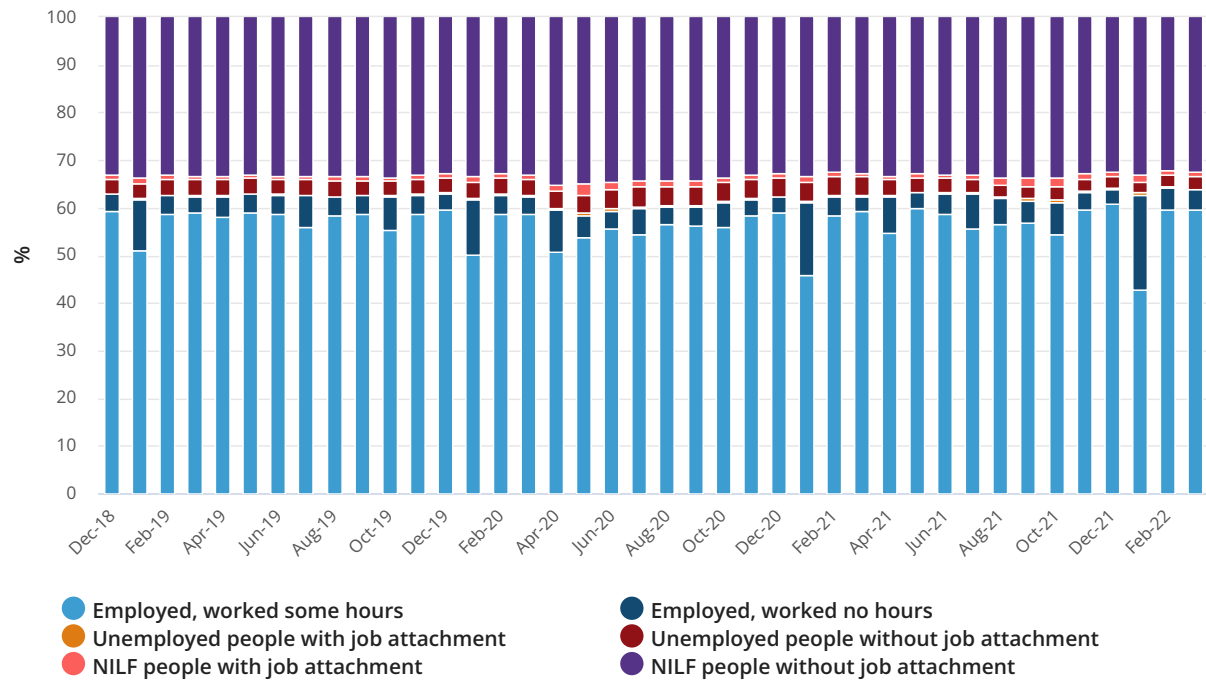
Chart 1: Not employed people with job attachment, Original



Source: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia

## Share of the working age population

Chart 2: Population by Labour force status, Original



Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2a and Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia

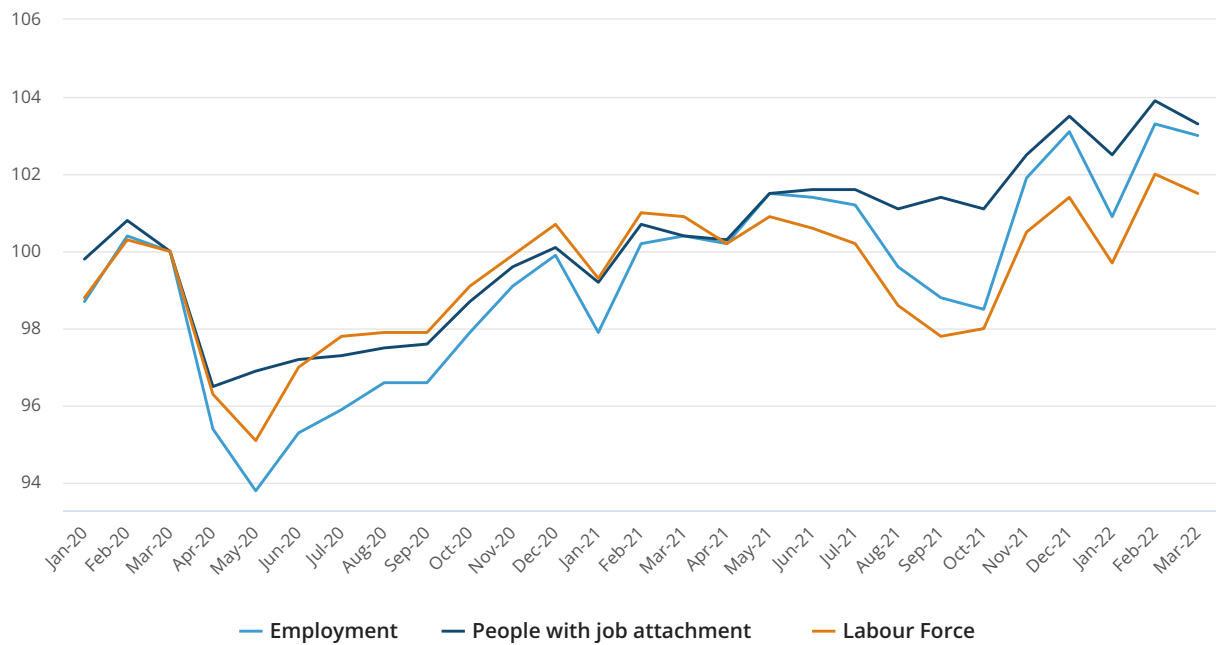
## Comparing changes in job attachment with employment and participation

Chart 3: Employment, job attachment and participation through the pandemic, Original



Source: Labour Force, Australia Table 1 and Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia

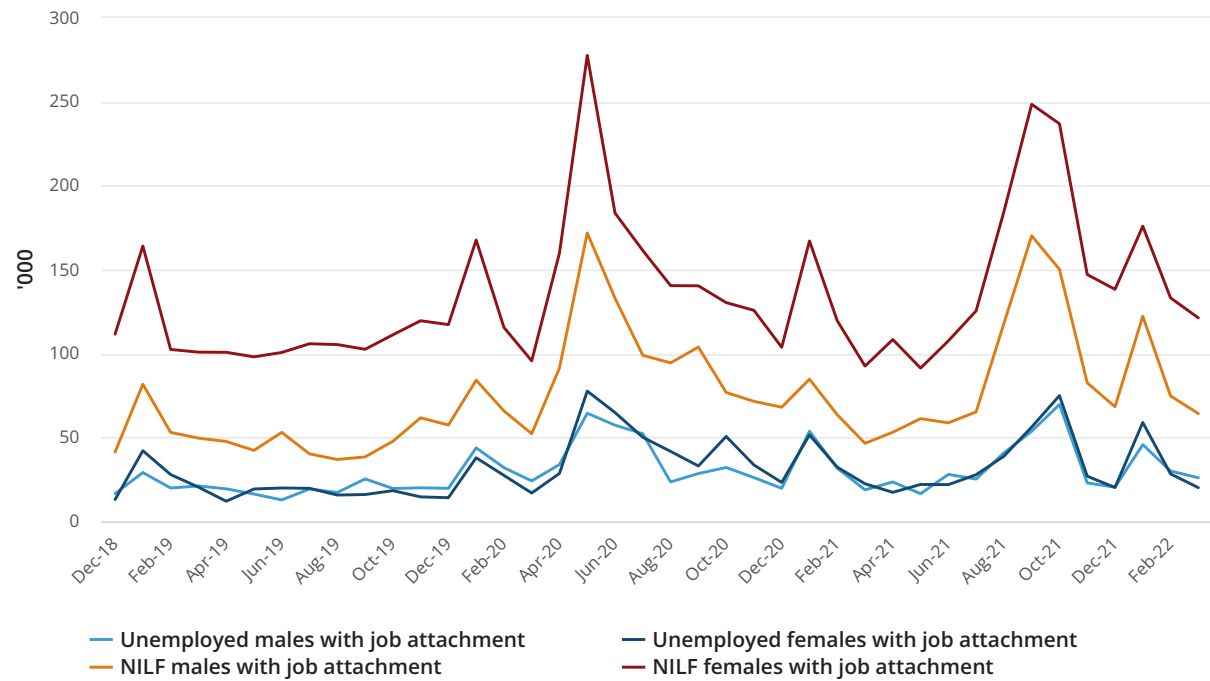
Chart 4: Change in employment, people with job attachment and labour force Index, Original (March 2020 = 100.0)



Source: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia

## Sex

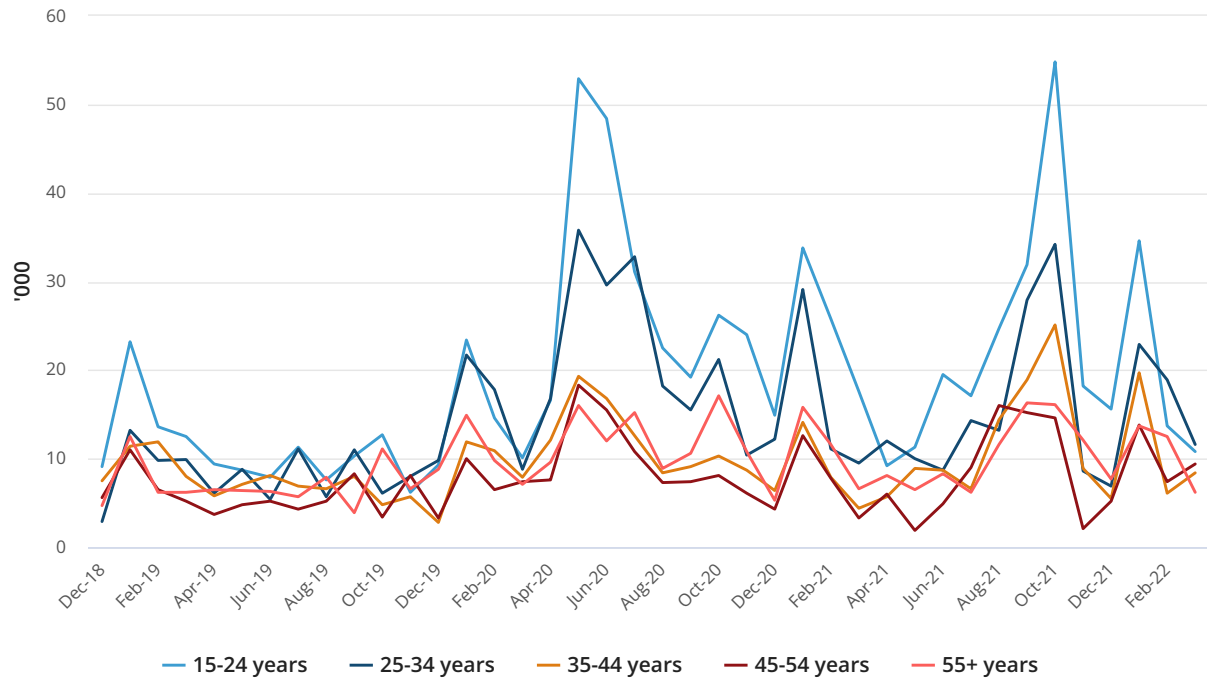
Chart 5: Not employed people with job attachment, Original



Source: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia

Age

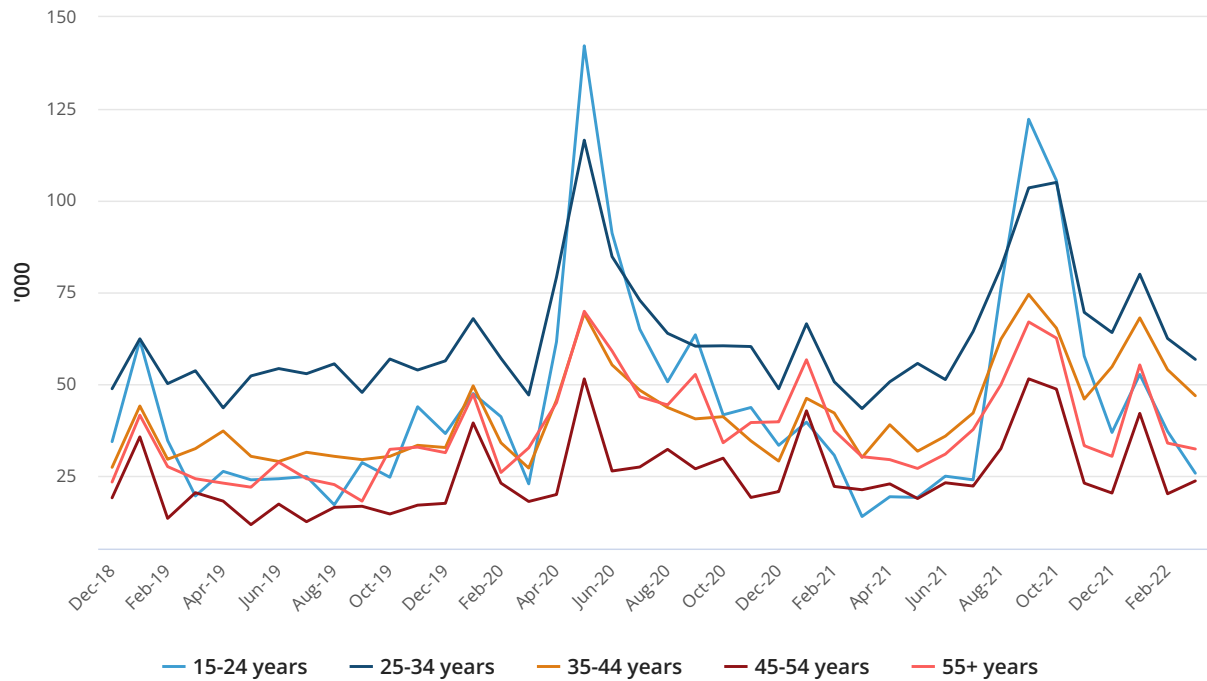
Chart 6a: Unemployed people with job attachment by Age, Original



Source: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia



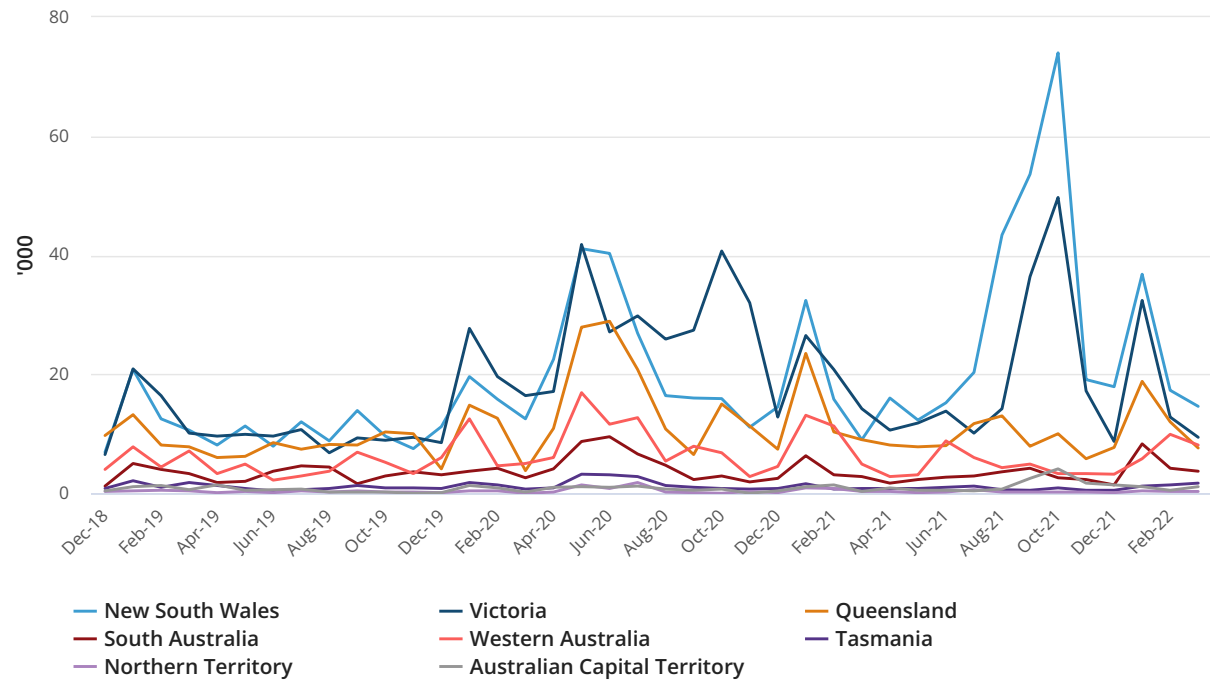
Chart 6b: People not in the labour force with job attachment by Age, Original



Source: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia

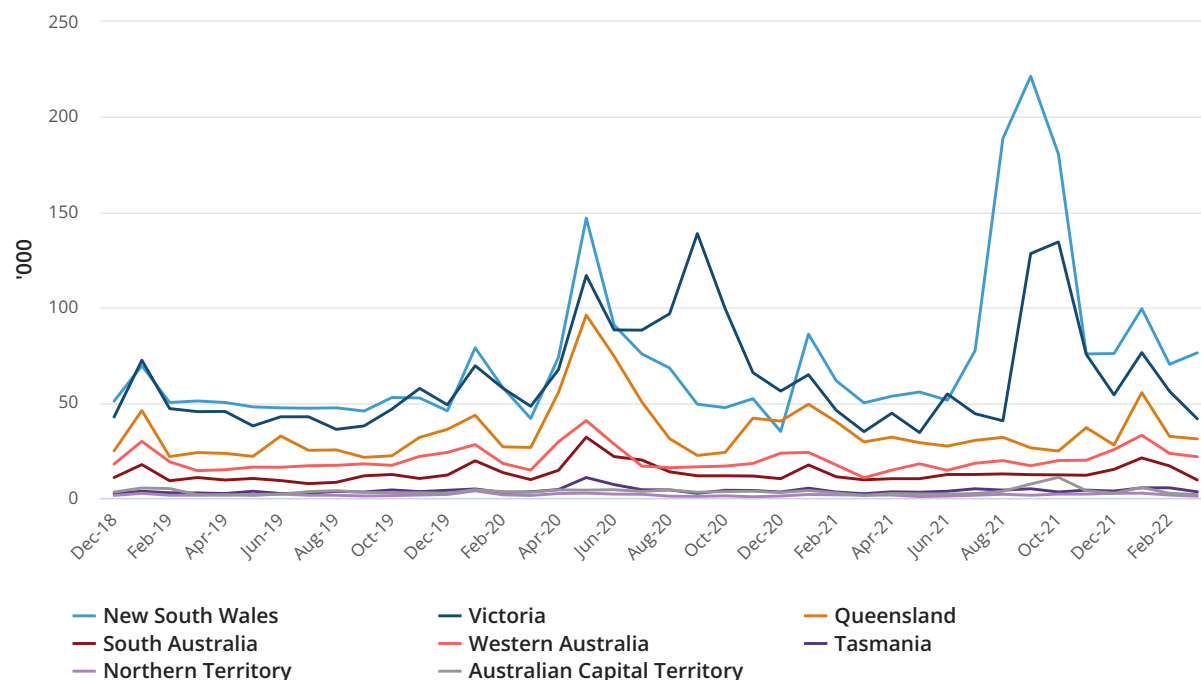
## States and territories

Chart 7a: Unemployed people with job attachment by State, Original



Source: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia

Chart 7b: People not in the labour force with job attachment by State, Original



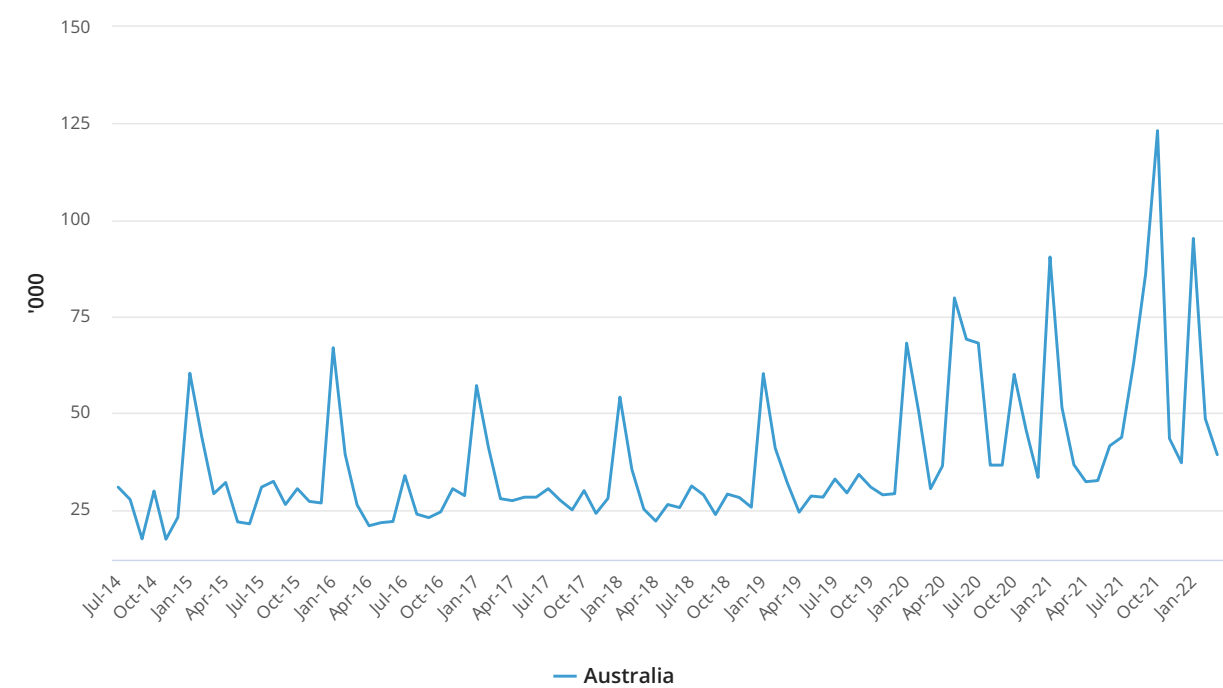
Source: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia

For further information, email [labour.statistics@abs.gov.au](mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au) (<mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au>).

## Appendix: Unemployed people who were future starters

In March 2022, the number of unemployed future starters was 39,200.

Unemployed future starters, Original



Source: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia